

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Ferrari: State House Kills Measure that Would Have Criminalized Gun Theft Victims



The state House of Representatives Friday rejected a measure opposed by state Representative Richard F. Ferrari that would have criminalized law-abiding gun owners whose firearms were stolen or lost.

“Like most gun control measures, this one was directed against law-abiding gun owners rather than criminals who use illegally-acquired firearms in the commission of crimes,” said Representative Ferrari, R-62nd District, who spoke against the measure in debate on the floor of the House. “What I and many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle found most offensive about this bill was that it would have victimized, honest, hard-working people twice: once, when their firearms were stolen, and again, if they failed to report the theft within the prescribed time period.”

“Most legitimate gun owners store their firearms in containers that they keep in closets, desk drawers or cabinets,” Representative Ferrari said. “Unless they take their firearms to shooting ranges on a regular basis, most gun owners do not check them every day or even every week, so it is very possible that a stolen firearm could go unnoticed for weeks at a time.

Paradoxically, if this measure had passed, it could have been a disincentive for law-abiding gun owners to report a theft, particularly if the theft was not discovered until several weeks after it occurred and the victim was worried about being hit with a \$500 fine for doing the right thing.”

“If gun control advocates were really serious about getting guns off the streets, one of the most effective actions they could take would simply be to provide the funding necessary to reactivate the state’s Gun Trafficking Task Force,” Representative Ferrari said. “The task force, which was authorized several years ago, was able to operate effectively for little more a year, when its funding was cut. During the period when it was active, it established a remarkable record of success in getting illegal guns off the streets and arresting those who illegally sell guns to criminals.”

“The real goal of many gun control groups is to make the private ownership of firearms illegal, which would turn thousands of law-abiding people into criminals,” Representative Ferrari said. “Similarly, many of the legislators who were supporting this measure were perfectly willing to criminalize legitimate gun owners but oppose funding the Gun Trafficking Task Force, which has a proven record of success in keeping guns out of the hands of violent criminals.”

The measure, an amendment to a bill (Senate Bill 105) that would have prohibited the sale of electronic defense weapons, was rejected on a vote of 79 – 66. It would have required gun theft victims whose firearms were stolen or lost to report the incident to police within 72 hours “after [the] person knew or should have known” about the theft or loss. Persons who

failed to report the theft or loss within 72 hours would have been subject to \$500 fines.